

RECOGNIZING BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, tonight, Members of Congress who are Eagle Scouts are taking to the floor of the House of Representatives to say thank you not only to the Boy Scouts of America but to recognize and to highlight our opportunity while in Boy Scouts, and now, as Members of Congress, to talk about how important the Boy Scouts of America is to the youth, the young men and young women of this country, and, also, to highlight the leadership that takes place every single day in this country: men and women who volunteer their time to make sure that the Boy Scouts of America are prepared and ready to meet not only the times that we live in but the advances of young people and the challenges that they have.

Tonight, as an Eagle Scout of the Eagle class of 1970, it is my opportunity to introduce Members of Congress and then to follow up at the end as we talk about how important Scouting is.

Today, there are 1,262,311 boys in Scouting from ages 6 to 10 in Cub Scouts. There are 822,999 boys aged 11 to 17 in Boy Scouts of America and Varsity Scouts. There are 119,268 young men and young women between the ages of 10 to 20 who are engaged in exploring based upon programs that may be STEM or other Scouting programs.

As you see, Mr. Speaker, the Boy Scouts of America is important to the youth of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. COLLINS), who is the head of our Scouting Caucus, and the Eagle class of 1963.

Mr. COLLINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS for yielding. I am very honored to be standing with him today as the co-chair of the Scouting Caucus, along with Eagle Scout JIM COOPER from Tennessee.

There are, in fact, 33 Eagle Scouts—23 from the House of Representatives and 10 from the Senate—currently serving in the United States Congress. But just as importantly, there are 150 Members of Congress who experienced Scouting, whether as a youth, and, perhaps, in the case of 33 progressing to the rank of Eagle Scout, or, currently

as myself does, serving as an adult Scout leader.

Scouting was important to many of us growing up. I think when a lot of us look back on our lives and say what was one of the larger impacts we had, I can tell you, in my case, it was Scouting.

And the same is true for my 24-year-old Eagle Scout son. I can't tell you how many different camping trips my son and I enjoyed together—what a great bonding experience for a father and a son coming right up through Cub Scouts.

So for all of those Scouts today, as Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS indicated, who are currently involved in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and Explorers, Scouting is changing their lives, and it is changing their lives for the better.

We have all heard the 12 points of the Scout law. That is a compass for the youth of America today, when they are faced with tough decisions, to look at those 12 points and remind themselves that a Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. Those 12 points of the Scout law are a compass for them to live their life and make the right decisions.

□ 1800

Many cases I referred to the first three words of the Scout Oath, and we can't talk about them enough, those first three words, "on my honor." That is so important today for our youth to have a compass, to understand what honor is, and Scouting introduces them to that.

But I will also tell you what Scouting is. It is young men, young boys having fun outdoors. Some say today the problem with youth in America is they have and they suffer from nature deficit disorder: They don't get outside enough; they don't know how to play outdoors; they are stuck with their electronic devices.

Well, Scouting gets the youth of America outside. It is healthy. They get to enjoy themselves, learn all kinds of skills, but just the friendships that they get within Scouting that, over a lifetime, will help them as they become the future leaders of America.

There are a disproportionate number of leaders in America today who were Scouts and, in fact, Eagle Scouts. Today, in President Trump's Cabinet, we are honored as a country to have four Eagle Scouts: Eagle Scout Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State; Eagle Scout Rick Perry, Secretary of Energy; Eagle Scout Jeff Sessions, our current Attorney General; and Eagle Scout, Ryan Zinke, our Secretary of the Interior.

I will tell you, in most of their cases, they would identify Scouting as a major part of them growing up and, maybe they didn't know it at the time, but giving them the life skills that have served them to the point today they are serving our Nation.

We have 27 Members in the bipartisan Scouting Caucus; many, but not all, are Eagle Scouts. I think all of us are proud to talk about our past as an Eagle Scout, but we also remind people, to this day, we are Eagle Scouts.

Once a year, our Chief Scout Executive, Mike Surbaugh, comes to Washington, D.C., to present a report on the status of Scouting in the Nation today. We have a great reception for our Chief Scout Executive once a year to welcome him and Scouts from around the country as they present to us the status of Scouting in America today.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the last four presidents of the Boy Scouts of America. Our current president, Randall Stephenson, is the current CEO of AT&T. He followed Bob Gates, who was our Secretary of Defense; Wayne Perry, the vice chairman of AT&T; and our own Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, when he was CEO of Exxon, was the president of the Boy Scouts of America.

So I think all of us today understand the importance of Scouting in our lives and, in many cases, just reflect back on the fun that we had as young kids and young adults.

Once every 4 years, all the Scouts in America gather, with some from around the world as well, at our national Scout jamboree. We currently have a permanent Scout High Adventure site in West Virginia at the Summit.

Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS and I, as well as others, 4 years ago, went to the Summit. And you know what? We just had fun. We went down the zip line. We went on some of the other obstacle courses. Even as adults, it was reliving our youth. And we intend to go back later in July for, every 4 years, as I said, they have the national Scout jamboree. Somewhere in the neighborhood of 40,000 Scouts from around the United States will gather for approximately 1 week and just have a lot of fun, get to meet others from around the country.

So that is what Scouting is. I can't think of a more healthy activity for young men to be involved in, and, I think, in many cases, certainly, the moms of this world understand the important values that their sons are getting, as well as the dads.

I can just tell you, I am happy to stay involved in Scouting. As the co-chair of the Eagle Scout Caucus, I am proud to remind people I am today an Eagle Scout. And we also have fun shaking hands with our left hand. That's how Scouts do it, the hand closest to our heart.

I was with our Secretary of State in Alaska a week ago and went to introduce myself. He put out his right hand to shake hands, as adults do, and I said: "No, sir, Mr. Secretary. As one Eagle Scout to another, we are going to shake hands the right way, with our left hands." He got a big smile on his face because he knew exactly what I was talking about.

So Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS, I want to thank you for giving me the

opportunity to talk a little bit about Scouting today in our Congress. Thank you for your leadership in our Special Order tonight, and I look forward to hearing from our other Members of Congress, fellow Eagle Scouts. I know it impacted their life.

Thank you again for your leadership tonight.

Mr. SESSIONS. Eagle Scout CHRIS COLLINS, thank you very much.

By the way, one of those presidents of the Boy Scouts of America was Ed Whitacre. When I was at AT&T, Mr. Whitacre led the Boy Scouts of America, understanding how important it is.

Ladies and gentlemen, the gentleman from Texas, the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, the gentleman from Dallas, Texas, is also an Eagle Scout. JEB HENSARLING not only is a bright, young, thoughtful, articulate leader in the United States Congress, he is Eagle Class of 1971.

Chairman HENSARLING, as an Eagle Scout, not only distinguished himself to Scouting, but also, that led him to Texas A&M University and then, further, to the University of Texas Law School. He is a young man who not only deeply believes in his country and his God, but he believes in the things that have brought him forward to become a leader in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, Eagle Scout JEB HENSARLING.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank the gentleman for yielding.

I have had many opportunities in my career to come to this House floor and speak about topics of great importance, but few are as near and dear to my heart as is Scouting.

So, one, I want to thank the gentleman from New York for his leadership and the gentleman from Texas for his leadership and keeping Scouting alive not only in their hearts, but in the heart of the House and in the hearts of so many young men in America today.

Mr. Speaker, as I think about my own life, I think how terribly blessed I have been. I think about the molders of my character, and, certainly, I thank the Lord for the blessing of being able to worship Him in the land of the free. And I think about the impact my church has had upon my life.

I think how blessed I am to have parents like Charles and Ann Hensarling, who raised me in College Station, Texas, and how proud I am to be my mother's son and how proud I was to be my late father's son. But I also think about what Scouting meant as a molders of my character.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what originally drew me to Scouting. I was originally drawn to the fun of it, to the high adventure, to the camping trips, to those Capture the Flag games that went on to the wee hours of the morning. Little did I know how long one could actually hunt for a snipe back in the early days of my Scouting career.

And so I was drawn to Indian lore and canoeing and camping, and that was so exciting to me.

So when I think about my Scouting career, Mr. Speaker, I think about, you know, the fun I had. I think about the friendships. There are people I haven't seen for decades, but, you know, I think about a friend by the name of Dennis Gary, whom I haven't seen in decades. But if I saw him tomorrow, I would know him because I would know him through his heart, because we experienced Scouting together, and so many others.

I think about the many practical things I learned in my Scouting career. I hope I never fall into a hole and break an arm, but if I did, even today at my ripe old age, I could still tie a one-handed bowline. I still know how to do that.

I hope I am never lost in the forest for days on end, but, you know, Mr. Speaker, I know that, as distasteful as it would be, I could survive off of cat-tail root and dandelion leaves because that is what Scouting taught me.

So Scouting is about fun; it is about friendship; but it was about practical things that I learned. Mr. Speaker, there is even a far more important aspect to Scouting, and that is values, the values that we learned.

So even today, as a Member of Congress, I know how important it is to be prepared, to be prepared before I come to this House floor and try to convince fellow Members of this august body on actions that we should take in the life of a great nation.

As we deal with so many issues about the lives of a great nation, I also remember, for example, somebody who wasn't in the Boy Scouts—my wife. I know back in Dallas, Texas, almost every week of her life she is driving some indigent cancer patient to their treatments.

I reflected that, although as Members of Congress we deal with matters of great importance that impact millions and millions of people, I have got to tell you, my wife, back in Dallas, Texas, does a good turn daily. It reminds me that I learned in Scouting how important it is to help one human life at a time and to do a good turn daily.

When I look upon my colleagues here in Congress today, I think about a certain colleague, and I am not going to mention his name, but a colleague who at one time wasn't quite keeping up with his diet. He wasn't quite keeping up with his exercise. Although he had young children, he had a heart attack, and we almost lost this colleague, but he came back. It is a reminder how important it is to keep ourselves physically strong for our children, for our parents, for our colleagues, and for our friends. That is something I learned in Scouting, Mr. Speaker.

I think about another friend whose wife almost was lost when she was diagnosed with a very serious form of cancer, stage IV. But there was an

oncologist here in this area, in the Washington area, who was on the cutting edge of cancer research that saved her life, and she was—the percentages against her, there was a 99 percent chance she wouldn't make it, but she did because somebody decided to be mentally awake. That is something else I learned in Scouting, Mr. Speaker, how important it is to be mentally awake.

And one day, when I leave this institution, some of the finest people I have ever met in life I know will have served in the United States of House of Representatives, but, unfortunately, a couple of them represent the worst. A couple of them have turned in their pin stripes for prison stripes because somehow they lost their way.

In Scouting, we are taught to orient a map with a physical compass, but we are also taught to orient the map of life with a moral compass. So I learned in Scouting how important it was to be morally straight, to have that internal compass to guide us at all times.

So I will admit, I am not proud of the fact, Mr. Speaker, but you know what? The words, over the years, occasionally they are a little rusty to me. I don't quite recite them as I once did. I don't always recite the words: "On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to my God and my country, to obey the Scout Law, to help others at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, occasionally the words are a little rusty, but the principles are as alive to me today as they were almost half a century ago when I first entered Scouting and followed that career all the way up to Eagle Scout, something I am so, so very proud of today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope anybody who is watching the proceedings at this time will, again, understand how valuable Scouting is to all of us. It is not just important to my own personal life. It is important to the life of a great nation.

Our first President, the Father of our Country, said that you cannot have a free society which is not a moral society. Scouting helps make certain we have a moral society.

□ 1815

So I think of the fun, I think of the friendship, I think of the lessons, but, most importantly, I think about that moral compass for the map of life that has guided me and, with Scouting to come in the future, will guide the life of this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Dallas for his leadership, I thank him for his friendship, I thank him for all he means for Scouting, and I thank him for yielding to me.

Mr. SESSIONS. Chairman HENSARLING, Eagle Scout, class of 1971, thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I hold a Scoutbook, something I call the second good book. Of course, we know in Scouting, the

good book is the Bible; but to Scouters, also the second good book is the Boy Scout Handbook. This was given to me in 2010 by Bob Mazzuca, who is our chief Scout executive, and he gave it to me with really a guide to my life to continue down that pathway of talking about Scouting in great ways. And that is what we are doing tonight.

I acknowledge that we not only have JOHN GARAMENDI, who is an Eagle Scout, class of 1960, who will be speaking in a bit, but on a bipartisan basis, this body has young people, young men who understood why they got into Scouting. They understood about their life. They certainly understand it now.

At this time I would like to bring forth Eagle Scout FRENCH HILL, 1972, from Arkansas, a relatively new Member of Congress, not only a mature man, but a man who comes with the proxy of knowledge of what Boy Scouting has helped provide him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), an Eagle Scout.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman SESSIONS for holding this Special Order. It means, I think, a lot not only to the Scouts that are here in the House of Representatives and the Senate to recognize the importance of Scouting to our country, but to all the mothers, fathers, and Scouts that are seeing this proceeding on C-SPAN or will hear about it to realize that they are participating in something that is very special.

I mean, I think of Scouting, really, Mr. Speaker, as a gift to the country for all of the reasons that the previous speakers have noted. I can't think about Scouting without thinking about what it has meant to me, Chairman SESSIONS, and influencing on my young life. Role models is the first thing that comes to mind with Scouting.

I think about my dad—who was not an Eagle Scout. He was a Sea Scout—and he ended up being basically a Life Scout for life, as people say in Scouting. But nobody was more influential to me in my youth than my dad—currently 91 years old—a Scout still at heart, and all the experiences we had together, how we bonded as father and son, and how, when I went off to college, Mr. Speaker, he continued to be a role model and adult leader for young men for years to come.

That is the kind of person that is in every one of our communities all over this country, helping mold our young people through the Scouting program.

Mr. Speaker, Scouting was my first paid job. I worked at a Scout camp. I earned, I believe, something like \$10 a week, plus room and board, of course. It is when I first learned who FICA was because, at \$10 a week, I wanted to know who took this \$2 out of my \$10 check. So I learned my first lesson about Federal economic policy and who FICA was as a Boy Scout working at the end of a very dusty parking lot for 7 weeks in the hot summer of Arkansas, teaching, pioneering, cooking, and camping merit badges.

But I think of other adults besides my dad. I think about Angelo Coppola and Fred Bean, both constituents of mine now that I serve in the people's House who were camp directors at that camp where I was a very happy employee and Scout for those summers in the early 1970s.

So Scouting is about role models. Scouting is about character building, and that starts that relationship, I think, between our moms and our dads that are involved in the Scouting program, and what we give to kids today. And, boy, do we need that character development.

The Boy Scouts of America was formed in 1910 and was inspired by British war hero Robert S.S. Baden-Powell of the Scouting program started back in the U.K. A lot of people today who are involved in Scouting, even at this moment, Mr. Speaker, don't know that the U.S. Congress presented a law to Woodrow Wilson, who signed it in 1916, chartering the Boy Scouts of America.

We are chartered by the United States Congress, and what a special feeling it is for all of us who are Scouts in Congress today to recognize that something that was so important to our youth was, in fact, chartered by the body that we serve in today.

In the early 20th century, Baden-Powell was thinking about how to expand army youth training with a place for all boys to dedicate their efforts to peace, not war, and he wanted Scouting to improve boys' lives by building their character, physical fitness, and outdoor skills.

He put a premium on bringing boys together from all walks of life, mixing boys from the elite prep schools and boarding schools with those in working class homes. And we do that today, Mr. Speaker. We bring boys from all backgrounds into the character-building exercises of Scouting.

Mr. COLLINS, a few minutes ago, talked about the importance of outdoor recreation, and that was certainly what brought me in. My interest in Scouting was outdoor recreation. When you think about it, in 1910, people were moving off the farm. People were urbanizing. We were passing laws on child labor. We were trying to make sure our boys coming off the farm away from home would have a good set of role models. So Scouting was so important to that urban youth that they get character and that outdoor experience.

And while that was a big deal back in 1910, I would argue, as CHRIS COLLINS did today, that it is a big deal now. He talked about a nature deficit. There is no doubt that we have that today, just as we did in some people's views back in 1910.

In 2005, Leonard Sax wrote a seminal book that I urge not only all of our Members to read, but people watching these proceedings to read, "Boys Adrift," where he argued that the lack of experiential learning and free playtime—particularly outdoors—in our

childhood is diminishing our effectiveness in learning as managers and our interpersonal relationships.

In 2008, Richard Louv wrote a book called "Last Child in the Woods," where he argued that unstructured outdoor playtime is critical to childhood development.

Well, that is exactly what Scouting does. It provides outdoor recreation, something I think is essential to childhood development; something that we have lost because of not only urbanization, but our changing behavior.

One recent nature conservancy poll found that only 10 percent of American teens spend time outside every day. I can't imagine on a day where the sun was shining when I was a teenager that I ever spent any time indoors. My parents were always on the hunt: Where is he? He is outside somewhere.

According to research by the Harvard School of Public Health, American adults spend less time outdoors than they do inside vehicles; less than 5 percent of their day.

So I think the scientific research says our boys and our girls need outdoor recreation. They need experiential learning. This is what is the core of the Scouting program. Like air and water, our wild places, our National Parks are essential to the education of our children and have greatly benefited the Boy Scouts and the Scouting experience. I can't imagine what my life would be like without that Scouting experience in terms of my love of the outdoors.

The second thing that attracted me to Scouting was the leadership opportunities. Baden-Powell said he wanted to be boy-driven. And here, 101 years after President Wilson signed the Boy Scouts of America into law, Scouting prides itself, Mr. Speaker, on being boy-driven, kid-driven. That is how we teach responsibility, character, and leadership.

I like this famous list, Mr. SESSIONS, that we use at so many Eagle Scout ceremonies called "100 Scouts."

Mr. Speaker, of 100 Scouts, people who participate in Scouting:

Thirty will drop out their first year, but they will remember the program fondly.

Twelve will be from a family that has no religious organization or religious membership, and many will begin their first contact with the need to be morally straight and have, at their heart, a belief in God; 12 will be touched by the Scouting program.

Five will go on to earn their religious award from whatever faith tradition they have.

One will use their Scouting skills to save a life.

One will credit Scouting skills for saving their own life.

Eighteen will develop a lifelong hobby.

Eight will find their vocation through the exploration of the merit badge work they did as a Scout.

Seventeen will later become Scout leaders, like all of our Members here on this floor tonight.

Four will become an Eagle Scout.

Four out of that 100, Mr. Speaker, will earn the rank of Eagle Scout, and at least one will say they value earning that Eagle award more than their college degree.

When it comes to the role that Scouting plays, it is something that I am so proud of because I have a Scout in Troop 30 in St. Paul's Methodist Church in Little Rock, and I am so proud of the work that he has done on that trail toward Eagle. He is in the middle of planning his project now to combine his love of golf and Scouting. It is a service project at The First Tee of Central Arkansas in Little Rock, and I reflect it on the value of these Eagle projects across our communities in all 50 of our States and around the world.

Just in America, using 2014 data, about 150–140 people earn their Eagle rank a day in the United States. And in 2014, they spent 8.1 million hours, Mr. Speaker, on their Eagle Scout project, benefiting our towns, our communities, all over this country.

In the nonprofit world, if you applied a typical pay rate to that, a project rate that the independent sector uses of about \$23 an hour, that is \$188 million in public service value our Eagle Scouts have contributed across this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell Mr. SESSIONS how much I appreciate his taking time to highlight Scouting, and the value of Scouting to our town and our communities, but, more importantly, to our families at creating that sense of character that we have talked about tonight.

I am one of those people that values my Eagle Scout award, dating back to 1972, from Troop 27, at Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church in Little Rock. And I am so proud that this many years later I still have the ability to support my son who is on that Eagle trail, and have the support of my dad that many long years after 1972 and my Eagle award because, in our family, we believe in a good turn daily. We believe in the Scout law. We believe in the Scout oath. And if there is one thing you need to do to survive in Congress, you have got to be prepared.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. SESSIONS for the opportunity to share these comments in support of Scouting. I thank the gentleman for his service to the National Eagle Scout Association and his long service to Circle Ten Council in Dallas, Texas.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, Eagle Scout Congressman FRENCH HILL, Eagle class of '72, thank you very much.

It is with great distinction now that I recognize Congressman Eagle Scout JIM BRIDENSTINE, 1991. It was about a week ago that Eagle Scout Bridenstine came up to me and said: Pete, I want you to know that my son is involved in Scouting, and I deeply believe in it, but I think we ought to get together here.

So it actually is Eagle Scout JIM BRIDENSTINE who said: Let's get to-

gether our Eagle Scouts and talk about it.

And I hope that the gentleman will have a chance to come on July 24 or so, as Eagle Scout Members of Congress, along with Senator MIKE ENZI, and perhaps others—my Down syndrome son, Eagle Scout Alexander Gregory Sessions, Troop 890, Lake Highlands, Texas, will join me—that you, too, with your son, may be able to go with us to the reserve and do that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRIDENSTINE), a distinguished Eagle Scout.

□ 1830

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman Eagle Scout Chairman PETE SESSIONS for his great introduction. It is an absolute honor to be here.

About a week ago, I said I would like to get the Eagle Scouts together on the floor of the House of Representatives and talk about what it means to us to be Eagle Scouts, reflect on our history and our tradition and how great this institution has been for the United States of America for all of these years and how we must make sure that this institution stays strong for the years to come. When I brought that to the gentleman's attention, he said, absolutely, we will do it. I didn't talk to him again, and today we are doing it. I didn't have to ask twice.

As chairman of the Scouting Caucus here in the House of Representatives, the gentleman has led in a tremendous way. We have seen so many Eagle Scouts come to the Capitol, and he always gets all of us together and always has us talk face-to-face with the Scouts—not just Eagle Scouts—and encourage them from the earliest days of their Scouting careers.

I want to thank him for his leadership, because a lot of people could chair this committee, but he hasn't just chaired it; he has led it, and that reflects greatly on him.

When I think about my days as a Scout, I go all the way back to my Cub Scout days. In fact, it was even before I was a Scout. My brother was a year older than me, so he got to be a Cub Scout before I was a Cub Scout.

He got to participate in this new thing that was going on in the lives of the Bridenstines called the pinewood derby. He had this little car—a block of wood with some nails and some wheels—and we watched that car streak from the very top of the track and come to a screeching halt where the track leveled out. In fact, this little blue car didn't even make it to the end of the track.

Of course, all of these other Scouts had all their fancy cars that had their rounded wheels and graphite on the nails and all of the weights put in the car. We didn't know to do any of that.

So my brother, John Bridenstine, who was a Cub Scout before I was a Cub Scout, had to endure the pain of being a Scout and wanting to have the fast-

est car, and his didn't even make it to the end of the track.

Well, I will tell you this. There was a Life Scout named Wayne Bridenstine, who was our dad. He was not going to allow any of our cars to ever again not make it to the end of the track. So we went to work trying to learn everything we could about this pinewood derby.

We engineered a couple of what I think are the greatest cars in American Scouting history. The next year, the Bridenstine boys won first place and second place going forward. We won first place and second place in—I don't remember which—but we reversed it going backwards. So we went from having a car that didn't even reach the end of the track to winning the pinewood derby.

Many years later, now I have my own son. He is in Cub Scouts and he does the pinewood derby. I committed to him the same thing my dad committed to us back in those days: We are going to win the pinewood derby.

The first year we did it, we had great success. The second year, Dad got a little, maybe, overaggressive in his engineering. Maybe we put the weights a little too far back. As that car came down, it got really unstable and it wobbled. There were a couple of times it barely made it to the end of the track.

But I will tell you this. The relationship that I had with my dad and that my brother had with our dad and that was necessary to pull us from not even finishing the race to winning the race and now the relationship with my son, Walker Bridenstine, are things that are important in our family and will be for many years to come.

So those are some of my first ideas.

Of course, Cub Scouts led to the Arrow of Light. The very next progression is to become a Boy Scout. So we searched a number of different troops across Arlington, Texas, and Fort Worth, Texas. We were in the Longhorn Council at the time. We eventually settled on Troop 83.

I remember some of the leaders of the troop. Coach Wasden was a football coach at Hutcheson Junior High. That was somebody who was intense. He was serious about Scouts. Boy, if you were going to move up in rank, you were going to prove to him that you have done what was required.

Of course, earning merit badges was important to all of us who were trying to move up the ranks. I will never forget the first summer camp that we went on. My brother and I were not able to go to the summer camp that our troop went on. So we went to this thing called the Maverick Camp, where we went with a bunch of Scouts we didn't even know, but we had a great time.

I am not going to lie to you; it was a challenge. I was in fifth grade. My brother was in sixth grade. It was the middle of August in Texas. We will just say the middle of August in Texas. It was just as hot at midnight as it was at the noon hour.

We sweat a lot. We worked hard. We got seven merit badges that summer. That was intense. We didn't know you weren't supposed to get that many. We showed up back at our troop for the court of honor and people were shocked that we got seven. No wonder it was so hard. Nobody told us not to get seven merit badges in one summer camp.

These are some of the memories I had. My brother and I were really challenged and we got that done. The next summer, we did three or four merit badges and had a lot more fun. These are some of the memories.

I was the chaplain's aid. As the chaplain's aid, one of the things that I prayed for most was that the chaplain would show up on the campout so I wouldn't have to do the public speaking in front of everybody. And here I am now as a Member of Congress who publicly speaks as a living. That is one of the things the Boy Scouts of America gave me: the ability to stand before an audience and tell people what was on my mind.

My leadership experience was as the chaplain's aid. My brother was the senior patrol leader for Troop 83. I was in the Arrow of Light patrol. He was in the Bison Patrol. He was the senior patrol leader.

Summer camp after summer camp and all the things we heard, here is, I think, one of the important things that people need to remember: The Boy Scouts of America is an institution that trains leaders. You might not recognize it when you are in it because you believe you are just having fun, but then there come those moments in life when you really need to lean on the things that you learned as a Boy Scout, and it doesn't even dawn on you until later that you actually learned these things as a Boy Scout.

After I graduated from college, I joined the United States Navy. I became a pilot. Of course, one of the things we have to do is survival, evasion, resistance, and escape. In this process, we have to live in the woods for a period of time. We have to figure out how we are going to survive and evade for a week. During this time, you have to live based on the things that you see around you. You have to be able to start a fire.

Some of these basic things I was able to do that all the peers around me had no ability to do because they did not have the life experiences in the Boy Scouts of America.

We had to be able to cook a rabbit, something that I had done before and something that my peers, also Navy pilots, had not done. We had to be able to land navigate with a map and a compass, which, to me, was second nature because I had done it for years trying to get to my rank of Eagle. But for so many people, it was a foreign concept to use a map and a compass to land navigate from point A to point B.

I remember one group navigated point to point. Our group said: We don't want to go point to point because

if we miss the point, we won't know we missed the point. So we are going to intentionally offset, hit the river, and then we are going to know exactly where we are. Of course, we didn't miss the point. We knew where we were going.

But some of my peers who did not have the experiences I had went well beyond the point and didn't know they had gone down the point, then they had to come back. I could have told you that was going to happen because it had happened to me previously as somebody who was in the Boy Scouts of America.

These are very real-life experiences that you look back on and say: Why was I able to do this? I was able to do it because I was in the Boy Scouts of America.

You also look back and say there are things that are intangible, things that are not specific. I heard Eagle Scout JEB HENSARLING today—chairman, Congressman, Eagle Scout—talk about tying a bowline in one hand and how he doesn't anticipate finding himself at the bottom of a cliff with a broken arm, but if he did, he would be able to tie a one-handed bowline and somebody would be able to pull him out. Certainly, that is exactly the same kind of thing that I learned when I was going through the same program.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Walker Bridenstine, my son, had to learn how to tie a bowline. I was trying to teach him how to tie a bowline the old-fashioned way. I simply couldn't do it. When I tried to tie it as a one-handed bowline, I was able to do it. It just stuck with me all of these years.

So, again, these are specific skills. But the leadership, the ability to lead people are things that the Boy Scouts teach you. You apply these things every day in your life, and you don't even know you are doing it.

I will also say that, as employers, we look for leaders when we are trying to find whom we are going to hire. We see over and over again employers looking to hire Eagle Scouts from the Boy Scouts of America.

So there might be somebody today who is watching this maybe on C-SPAN, maybe on the internet; and maybe you are a Boy Scout, maybe you are a Cub Scout, maybe you are not sure if you are going to stick it out. I will tell you this. Every interview I have ever gone on, I had a resume. On that resume was included the fact that I was an Eagle Scout. Even when I was applying for college, I put on my resume and in all of my extracurricular classes that I was an Eagle Scout. I would highly encourage anybody that is maybe at a lower rank but working hard to attain that Eagle, finish your Eagle Scout.

My dad was a Life Scout. He moved when he was a Life Scout. He never finished his Eagle. His brother, JIM BRIDENSTINE, my uncle, did finish his Eagle Scout. Of course, my brother and I both finished our Eagle Scout, and

now our kids are in Scouts, and we are going to do everything we can to help them finish their Eagle Scout.

Not only did I put it on every resume, not only on all of my college applications, I will tell you, I also ran for Federal office. The first thing I did in my campaign commercials is tell people: My name is JIM BRIDENSTINE, and I am an Eagle Scout. Before I told them that I went to college or before I told them that I was a Navy pilot, I told them that I was an Eagle Scout.

I think it is important for people to understand that some folks have a desire from an early age to achieve. When employers look at a resume, when voters look at somebody running for office, they want to see that.

I will tell you, there was somebody who came into my office not too long ago wanting a job. I had a number of great candidates. It was nearly impossible for me to pick which one. We all know this: When you get to be a Member of Congress, you get hundreds of resumes the next day.

I was getting down to the end, and I was trying to figure out which one. I got down to three. When they left my office, one of the three said this: One other thing I need to let you know; I am an Eagle Scout.

That did it for me. I knew at that point that this young man had committed himself to something much bigger than himself from an early age. That person now works in my office.

I look for that. I know employers across this country look for that. It speaks volumes to the character and the training of the individual. That will continue.

I will tell you, when you think about all of the astronauts in the United States of America, the 316 or so of them in the history of the United States of America, 40 of them were Eagle Scouts. That is not by accident. I will tell you that is a much higher percentage than the number of Eagle Scouts who are produced in the Boy Scouts of America, and it is certainly a much higher percentage than the number of Eagle Scouts that exist in the population of the United States of America. So this is something that employers look for.

I took my 11-year-old son to the Air Force Academy just about a month ago. I took some brochures about what it takes to get into the Air Force Academy. There is all kinds of stuff in there about being an athlete and being a great student, but one of the six criteria that they look for is: Are you an Eagle Scout at the Air Force Academy of the United States of America?

I would also argue they probably look for the same thing at West Point and the Naval Academy. These are things that employers look for, that schools look for, that the military looks for. These are the character issues that are important.

So if you are in Scouting today, my encouragement to you is to finish, get your Eagle Scout. If you are below the

age of 18 and you have still got time, I would encourage you to join and get your Eagle Scout. It has been important for me. It has been important for my brother. It has been important for my family.

□ 1845

My uncle Jim's son, Shane, my cousin, is also an Eagle Scout. This is a tradition of the Bridenstine family, and I would encourage you to make it a tradition in yours.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to say thank you for your leadership and thank you for leading this effort.

Mr. SESSIONS. Eagle Scout JIM BRIDENSTINE, Member of Congress from Oklahoma, Eagle Class 1991, thank you very much.

The Scouting stories of leadership, of character, and of opportunity began in my life with my father, who was an Eagle Scout. His father, Dr. Will A. Sessions, in 1947 wrote the original God and Country Award Handbook. I wanted to be an Eagle Scout because of my dad. I have two young sons: William Steele Sessions II, who is an Eagle Scout, age 27; and Alexander Gregory Sessions, a Down syndrome young man, an Eagle Scout, who is 23. Scouting is in our blood, we believe it, but it is also in family blood. JIM BRIDENSTINE spoke about it, and CHRIS COLLINS spoke about the Eagle Class of '63.

This other next young man who is here will talk about Scouting and what a difference it makes. I wish we had hours, Mr. Speaker, but the rules allow 1 hour. He is a young man from Pennsylvania, Eagle Scout GLENN "GT" THOMPSON. I had an opportunity to go to Pennsylvania with the Chief Scout Executive and give GT THOMPSON his National and Distinguished Eagle Scout Award and pin him.

GLENN's wife is a Scouting widow. She is proud of her Eagle Scout sons, but she knows that the weekends are made for Scouting.

GT THOMPSON is a man who will be with me again at the Summit Bechtel Reserve this year for the Scouting Jamboree.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I thank you so much for this opportunity. It is great to have a distinguished brother Eagle Scout like yourself.

Mr. Speaker, Scouting has been a part of my family—or I have been part of the Scouting family, actually, since I was 11 years old. When I was 11 years old, my mom and dad did an amazing thing; they did what today I would call a good turn. It was really an amazing turn. They actually opened their home up—and this was appropriate since we are talking about a lot of foster youth this week, kids that grew up in foster families. They opened our family up to a boy that was just 2 years older than I, Bob. Bob came as a foster brother, and he is still my brother today.

Bob has some special needs. Bob had been bouncing around foster care homes his whole life, but when he came to our house, he didn't bounce anymore. He stuck. Like I said, he became my brother and is my brother today.

My mom and dad made a promise to him. One of the positive things that happened to Bob in the home he had been living in prior to coming to our home was that he got involved in a Boy Scout Troop. That Boy Scout Troop experience did amazing things for Bob. It really did. It was life changing for him because it allowed Bob to have success experiences, to enjoy the outdoors, and to flourish with things that he really developed a passion for.

As an 11-year-old younger brother, I lucked out. When mom and dad took Bob back over a couple of valleys to the Scout Troop where he was associated with—there was no Scout Troop in my hometown at the time—I got to tag along. I was 11 years old, and I never looked back.

I have been involved in Scouting since I have been 11 years old. I went on to achieve and earn my Eagle Scout Award. I have served as a Chapter Chief and a Juniata Lodge Chief in the Monocan Lodge in the Juniata Valley Council with the Order of the Arrow. I went on to be a Scout Master for 30 years.

One of the hardest parts about coming to Congress was the fact that I wasn't going to be home to be able to work with those youth leaders who were leading the troop for Scout meetings, campouts, and events on the weekend. That was the hardest part about taking this job because I had been a Scout Master for almost 30 years. I had trained Scout Masters, I was a course director, and I had served my council as a council president.

I am still involved with Scouting. I was back at my old stomping ground at the Seven Mountains Scout Camp in Spring Mills, Pennsylvania, on Sunday for an Eagle Scout court of honor. Here is the cool part of that: at that site over 70 years ago, my father-in-law received his Eagle Scout Award. Now, I am not saying it should be a prerequisite for picking out a wife that her dad is an Eagle Scout, but it worked out okay for me. It wasn't a bad thing.

So Scouting has been a big part of our family. My wife, Penny, has been a Cub Scout leader and a committee member, and, yes, a Scouting widow when our three sons and I, at different times, would pack up and go off to camp and High Adventure. Sometimes she would come along, actually. A lot of times she was left at home. Unfortunately, she was there to accept all the dirty laundry at the end of the weekend or the week, but she is just as much a Scouting leader. When I think about a great Scouting leader, my wife, Penny, comes to mind with what she has done.

I enjoy the opportunities to go out to Eagle Scout courts of honor. It really

is a great opportunity to reconnect and to be a part of Scouting. I enjoy going to Girl Scout Gold Awards as well. So when I go there, normally I will look at the new Eagle Scout. I will talk about how we are there to celebrate all the merit badges they have earned, the citizenship that has been reflected in their actions, the character that we have seen, and the service that they have provided that now entitles them to be able to have that red, white, and blue piece of ribbon with a piece of metal in the shape of an eagle hang from their chest.

I also tell them they are ready for one last test question. I will look them in the eye and say: It has been over 100 years since Scouting came to these shores from England, where Scouting was first originated. So the question I give them is: Over 100 years, how many Eagle Scout Awards have been given away?

These kids are really smart. Somehow they are trying to do the math in their head. I stop them, and I say: Whoa. Stop. This is a trick question. The answer is zero. They have all been earned. None of them has ever been given away.

I talk about how now, as new Eagle Scouts, they have this tool chest that they carry with them. They don't carry it physically in their hands; they carry it in here. And it really is the principles of Scouting, because we stop and we start our meetings, we start our meetings, we end our meetings, we do our campouts and our Scouts' own worship services. We are always using and repeating the 12 points of the Scout law and three parts of the Scout promise. We do that because we want these boys who start out as young boys and become men to have muscle memory.

Muscle memory is not just on the good days where it is easy things, where things are going well and we are all celebrating and high-fiving each other and life is good, but on the bad days. Bad days do come. Life will be hard at times. We want them, especially in those times, to be able to rely on that muscle memory of those principles of Scouting.

I talk about how in this Chamber we are here voting. The chairman knows this. There are 435 of us. It is kind of interesting if you watch how people make up their mind to vote. It is pretty diverse sometimes. But for people like myself—I will take the liberty. I know this man well. This gentleman right here, Mr. SESSIONS, is an Eagle Scout. I fall back on the principles of Scouting.

I ask myself four questions when it comes time to vote. The first question is: In the decision I am about to make, what is my duty to God? Is the decision righteous according to God's Word and my faith?

Now, I said there are four questions. But if the answer is "no" on the first one, I don't go on to two, three, and four. I stop right there. If the answer is "yes," then the next question is: In the

decision I am about to make, what is my duty to country? What does the Constitution have to say about this decision that is before us?

The third question I ask is: In the decision I am about to make, what is my duty to others?

Now, that one is a little harder because that is like: How does this impact more than 730,000 citizens that I have the privilege and honor to represent—16 counties, 24 percent of the landmass of Pennsylvania?

Finally, the last question is: What is my duty to self?

Now, for those who maybe it has been awhile since you have been involved in the Scouting family or maybe you just never had that opportunity, there is still time for everybody to get involved and support Scouting. There are a lot of volunteer jobs out there that can be filled. What we mean when we say duty to self, it is not self-serving. We define that by in every action we take and every decision we make, we are prepared to do our best. That is a reflection of the Scout motto and the Scout slogans. So those are principles as Eagle Scouts I really do believe that, by that point, it becomes muscle memory.

Any youth, for whatever period of time they have the opportunity to serve in Scouting, we know based on the research division of the Boy Scouts of America that it makes a difference in their lives.

I will finish up with this. I have said that, as a Scout Master for 30 years, I have seen this work its way out countless times, but let me take a personal privilege and just mention three particular Eagle Scouts: Parker, Logan, and Kale Thompson, my three sons. They are all three Eagle Scouts. They are all adults now. They are scattered—if anything, maybe one flaw is we made them too independent. They are now flourishing, one in Elgin, Illinois; one in San Antonio, Texas; and one in Trenton, New Jersey. Independent—I guess Scouting will do that. You learn to fly as an Eagle Scout.

I will tell you what I have seen. Parker today is a great dad. What he does with his two little guys, I see the lessons he learned in Scouting that just come through in how he nourishes.

Logan, my second son, is a soldier. Although I worried about him, I didn't worry as much when he was deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan because I knew that, as an Eagle Scout, he could handle whatever came to him.

My youngest, Kale, is a music teacher today who nourishes and just serves youth, kids in middle school, and makes such a difference in their lives.

In the lives of my three sons, I see how being a Boy Scout and an Eagle Scout has made them better men and made them better in all the roles that they serve.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Eagle Scout GLENN THOMPSON, Eagle Scout 1977. On behalf of Chief Scout Executive Mike Surbaugh and Mem-

bers of Congress who gathered together this evening to tell another story, I intend to do it again next month. I intend to get JOHN GARAMENDI, who is one of our dear friends from California, Eagle Class of 1960.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Eagle Scouts of Congress who had time to come tonight, myself, CHRIS COLLINS, JEB HENSARLING, FRENCH HILL, JIM BRIDENSTINE, GT THOMPSON, I am thankful for the hour you have allowed us to tell the story about the Boy Scouts of America, about exceptionalism, about the Order of the Arrow, and about the opportunity for character to lead a great nation.

Mr. Speaker, we are thankful for the time. We will be back. We hope that we leave our campsite better than the way we found it. That is what we try to do every day.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FASO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who, for the last hour, have talked about an extremely important part of America's social fabric: the Scouting programs of America. I thank them for bringing to Congress and to the American people the importance of Scouting at all levels. And for those of us who have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, much was discussed.

Equally important are the men that enter and only spend a couple of weeks and do not pass beyond the Tenderfoot level because they, too, have achieved, at least in part, the opportunities that Scouting presents.

I will talk about that more in the future, and I will look forward to that discussion. In the meantime, let's see if we can now talk about other things that are before Congress and the American public.

Mr. Speaker, almost unnoticed as a result of all of the issues—all of the controversies surrounding the President here in the United States, the controversies of Russia and Russia's involvement in the election, the firing of Comey and the investigations now conducted by a new special counsel, and, of course, the President's foreign travels, with all of that, we have basically not heard much about another extremely important and quite possibly a much longer lasting thing that has happened.

Today the President presented his budget. A budget presented by the President is often just waved aside by the Congress and considered to be dead on arrival, and surely this one should be. But I want to back up for a moment and I want us all to ponder exactly what it is that the President has proposed.

□ 1900

Because, you see, the budget, whether it is a Democratic budget or a Republican budget, an Obama budget or a Trump budget or a George H.W. Bush budget, those budgets are a statement of priorities. They are a statement of the value, the values that is what it is that the President thinks is important and how that fits into the American society.

We need to really understand and value the statement that the President, President Trump, has made in presenting to us his priorities. We ought not just wave it aside and say it is of no consequence because, after all, we are going to rewrite it and we are going to write our own, which is the tradition. However, it would be a gross mistake not to analyze what it is that the President of the United States of America, the strongest, the wealthiest country in the world, has proposed.

Take a careful look, America. Don't just brush it aside. This is what the President wants. This is what he wants us to be. This is his vision of America.

I must tell you, it is awful—not my words only, but the words of many Republican leaders, of, obviously, the Democrats.

Take a look, America, at what it is he is proposing.

I am going to run through some of this because we need to understand, Members of Congress, we Americans need to understand what it is that this President wants us to be, what it is he sees as America. I am going to go through just some things very, very quickly, and then we want to go into it perhaps in a little more detail.

Medicaid is a program that has been in existence for some 60-plus years. It is a program that provides healthcare to the poor. It is a program that provides care to seniors. It is a program that is relied upon all across this country by families so that the children and adults can get medical care.

The President has proposed, in his budget, a \$610 billion reduction in Medicare on top of, in addition to, an \$800 billion cut in what we know now as Trump and RyanCare, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. A \$1.5 trillion reduction in medical services to the poor. And they are not all kids. They are not all families. More than half of that money goes to seniors in nursing homes.

This is the vision of the President of the United States: \$1.5 trillion reduction in medical services over the next 10 years to working men and women just above the poverty level, to seniors who are in nursing homes, and to women and children who are below the poverty level. This is his vision of healthcare in America.

And that is not all. That is not the end of the story.

In the 1990s, we knew that children not covered by Medicaid or, in California, Medi-Cal were not getting medical services; and so the American people, through their representatives in